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[HOME PAGE](#)
[COINS FOR SALE](#)
[NEWSLETTER](#)
[COIN APPRAISALS](#)
[MORE...](#)


Making the Grade #20: "Swimmin' Pools and Movie Stars"

6/27/2015

[0 Comments](#)

Archives

[May 2019](#)
[February 2019](#)
[December 2018](#)
[June 2018](#)
[March 2018](#)
[October 2017](#)
[June 2017](#)
[May 2017](#)
[March 2017](#)
[December 2016](#)
[October 2016](#)
[September 2016](#)
[August 2016](#)
[June 2016](#)
[May 2016](#)
[February 2016](#)
[January 2016](#)
[November 2015](#)
[October 2015](#)
[August 2015](#)
[June 2015](#)
[May 2015](#)
[April 2015](#)



That headline above comes from a lyric in the theme song of The Beverly Hillbillies TV show (for those of you old enough to have wasted your time watching such programs while growing up, as I did, you will recognize it).

And it fits the themes of the 2 articles I wrote for your reading pleasure – see below. Or you can scroll down past them to see the new coin purchases, like (I assume) most people do when they open

these emails.

In the Newps section you'll find some selections from a high end type set, some choice colonial coins (that thankfully are NOT from recent auctions, and are therefore completely fresh) some key date coinage in high grade and even a stack of coins that is so crusty & original it still has shells and other sea life still attached to it (no foolin').

Recent Observation: Humans are Instinctively Attracted to the Out-Of-The-Ordinary.

A few days ago I took my son & his friend to a nearby amusement park. One of the rides was called the, "Lazy River"

(seems perfectly suited to a coin dealer, I thought). It is a ride where you get into an inner tube and you drift down a winding "river" with waterfalls, etc. to get you wet, should you feel the need to.

While standing in line I noticed there were 2 types of inner tubes. About 19 out of every 20 were clear plastic inner tubes, and one out of 20 were inner tubes made to look like a donut with sprinkles on it (I think they were promoting a "Simpsons" ride elsewhere in the park).

The reason I mention this is – I noticed that all of the kids (and more than a few adults too) wanted to ride on one of those donuts. After waiting in line 20 minutes for the ride, some of them would even wait a few minutes longer for their own personal "donut".

I can't prove it but I suspect that if the situation were reversed, and 19 out of 20 of those inner tubes were donuts and only one out of 20 tubes was clear, the clear ones would then be in high demand.

My point – and I do have one – is that human beings seem to gravitate toward the unusual. Maybe there is some evolutionary reason – and maybe there isn't, but I have seen this time and time again in the coin hobby.

For instance, I just returned from the New Hampshire Coin Expo, which is a 2 day regional show with maybe 100 dealers set up. I happened to have a wildly toned Morgan dollar in my case. It was a common date, priced quite high and housed in a PCGS MS65 holder. See the photo.

So many folks at the show commented on and wanted to examine that particular coin that I lost count. It must have come out of the case 50 times, while the second most popular coin at my table might have had 5 people examine it over the course of the show. The photo of the coin is cool – but seeing the coin in hand is out of this world. And I guess that is enough to make it compelling and different and special for we humans.

Quiz Question: Who Has Dated Gwyneth Paltrow, Started a School of Rock Music, Battled a 25 Foot Tall Ape, Learned Kung Fu as a Panda And Also Collects Rare US Coins?

If you guessed the actor Jack Black, you'd be correct. So he says in a new interview in Rolling Stone magazine. This interview was published in the June 18, 2015 issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine.

I quote from that article: "In his spare time Black collects rare coins. 'I like the 1916 Standing Liberty quarter. When it was originally minted, she had an exposed breast, and you can actually gauge its quality by its definition'".

So when your kids tell you that collecting coins isn't cool, you'll have this weapon in your back pocket. Now all we have to do is convert Katy Perry and Jay Z into coin collectors and kids will be choking the aisles of coin shows. Or so my theory goes.

On to the NewP's

As in my previous newsletters, these coins are the items I have gathered over the last few weeks. The plan is to upload all these coins to my website. In the meantime, readers of this newsletter will be the very first to lay eyes on these offerings. By popular demand, I've included photos of the coins where I have them.

The "Making the Grade" Featured Coin –

(1785) Bar Copper. PCGS graded AU50 CAC.

Absolutely choice for the grade, with light milk chocolate brown color and no distractions. If getting a bar copper with a CAC sticker is important to you, here is your opportunity because they ain't-a-CACin' colonials no more. \$17,500.

[March 2015](#)[February 2015](#)[January 2015](#)[December 2014](#)[November 2014](#)[October 2014](#)[September 2014](#)[August 2014](#)[July 2014](#)[June 2014](#)[May 2014](#)[April 2014](#)[March 2014](#)[February 2014](#)

Author

Dave Wnuck

Professional Numismatists Guild (PNG) member since 2006. Member of all major numismatic organizations.

Dave is a contributor to the Redbook, as well as a member of the PCGS Board of Experts.



Categories

[All](#)

New Purchases**1739-B French Colonies Sou Marque. PCGS graded MS62.**

A semi-prooflike example that is fully silvered and sports a wonderful light golden tone. Many of these are quite unattractive; this one is a happy exception. \$395.

1793 Wreath Cent. NGC graded Fine-15.

Sheldon-6, considered to be rarity-3. The charmingly named "Sprung Die" because of the prominent obverse die bulge. Hard surfaces, beautiful chocolate brown color and just a few obverse abrasions, none worth individual mention. A great example of the first year of US coinage. PCGS #1347. \$9950.

1857 Flying Eagle Cent. NGC graded MS64.

Well struck, with hints of vibrant gold around the rims. \$1450.

1877 Indian Cent. NGC graded PF64 RB.

Hard mirrors and contrasting devices show the blue-green obverse toning that blends with mint red Z& brown to best advantage. Always in white hot demand as the key date in this popular series. \$5500.

1882 Indian Cent. PCGS graded PR66 BN [with Eagle Eye Photo Seal].

A beautiful looking coin, with green and crimson toning over hard mirrors. \$1300.

1914-D Lincoln Cent. NGC graded MS65 BN.

A beautiful example of the undisputed key date in the Lincoln cent series. And this one's a beauty too – full cartwheel luster on both sides and delightful original coloration. \$ 6950.

1865 Two Cent Piece. NGC graded MS64 BN.

Wild aqua and toning over swirling cartwheel. Lots of 2c pieces are just not that pleasing to look at – even in high grade. This is a happy exception. PCGS # 3582. \$295.

1871 Silver Three Cent Silver. PCGS graded PR67 CAC [ogh].

This is a coin I handled last year on memo for a customer. He priced it at closer to \$20,000, but found no takers. Same cool coin same dramatic look, same high grade, same old green tag PCGS holder, same CAC sticker. What's new is the dramatically lowered price, reflecting today's realities, when even great coins similar to this have started appearing on the market. \$13,750.

1883 No Cents Liberty Nickel. NGC graded MS65.

A booming, flashy coin with some wispy golden toning to add character. PCGS #3841. \$195.

1913 Buffalo Nickel. PCGS MS66.

Type 1. Gorgeous green and gold toning gives this first-year-of-type coin plenty of character. \$475.

1832 Bust Half Dime. PCGS graded MS62.

A great coin whose appearance belies its modest grade. Lustrous and with plenty of flash, this coin came out of a high grade US type set and is destined for another one. PCGS #4279. \$595.

1837 No Stars Seated Liberty Half Dime. NGC graded AU58.

Large Date. Lots of luster beneath gold toning with a hint of blue. A wispy horizontal die crack through the date adds interest. PCGS # \$595.

1883 Seated Liberty Dime. PCGS graded PR64.

Rings of blue-green-gold around the periphery fade to near white in the centers. PCGS #4780. \$875.

1910 Barber Dime. PCGS graded PR64+ CAC.

Attractive blue-green toning over hard mirrored surfaces. From a mintage of just 551 pieces, and the only 64+ graded of

the entire date. PCGS #4894. \$975

1880 Seated Quarter. NGC graded PF64 Cameo.

Both NGC and PCGS tend to not give out “cameo” designations to toned coins, but in this case they had no choice. Ultra-frosty devices shine through the peripheral blue toning and present a most pleasing appearance. PCGS #85581. \$1595.

1901 Barber Quarter. PCGS PR64.

Hard mirrors with a subtle ring of blue-green at the peripheries that fads to near white at the centers. PCGS #5687. \$995.

1930 Standing Liberty Quarter. PCGS graded MS62 Full Head.

A pure white blazer; hard to imagine why this coin did not grade higher. PCGS # 5779. \$260.

1837 Bust Half Dollar, Reeded Edge. PCGS graded MS63.

What a beautiful coin, with faintly prooflike luster under green and gold pastel toning. Very well struck, and not the faintest hint of rub anywhere on the coin – scarce as such. The collector from whom I obtained this coin said it was the best strike of any 1837 50c that he had ever seen, and it is hard to argue with that sentiment. PCGS #6176. \$ 2975.

1878 Seated Half Dollar. PCGS graded PR 64.

There are a lot of gorgeous coins on this list. But I think many folks will find this particular coin in the top echelon of them. Vibrant concentric rings of electric neon blue, which fades through the color spectrum to near white centers. Gazing at the PCGS TrueView image is a life changing experience. PCGS #6439. \$2950.

1899 Barber Half dollar. PGCS graded PR64 CAC.

Deep, hard mirrors and faint pastel blue toning around the peripheries. These are great looking coins in high grade proof format, as seen here. PCGS #6546. \$1650.

1904-S Barber Half Dollar. PCGS MS64+ CAC.

One of the keys to the Barber half dollars series, shown here in near gem and with a CAC sticker to boot. Frosty luster over light gold-green toning and a clean cheek to boot. There is exactly one MS64+ graded by PCGS, and only a few graded above this level. PCGS #6500. \$32,500.

1796 Draped Bust, Small Eagle Dollar. PCGS graded VF30.

Large Date, Small Letters Redbook type, as stated on the PCGS tag. BB-65, rarity-2. What a great looking small eagle dollar. Well struck, free of problems and with a noticeable amount of luster cling to the protected areas of the coin. PCGS #6861. \$5800.

1799 Draped Bust Dollar. PCGS VF35.

Thick gray and gold toning with hints of luster around the devices. PCGS # 6878. \$3250.

1885-O Morgan Dollar. PCGS graded MS-65.

Lovely rainbow “textile” toning on the obverse, white on the reverse. This coin is ex Goldberg's February 2006 auction (lot #1832) where it realized \$1955. PCGS # 7162. \$2750

1922-S Peace Dollar. PCGS MS64 CAC.

Booming luster, the slightest hint of golden toning and an absence of cuts, spots and marks that often mar these better date peace dollars. This coin would easily fit in a collection of MS65's, but at a small fraction of the cost. \$475.

1904 Liberty Double Eagle. PCGS graded MS63+.

Fresh, undipped and unmolested. Quite possibly from a Swiss bank vault, as the PCGS tag indicates it was graded in their Paris office. PCGS #9045. \$1895.

2009 \$20 Gold Ultra High Relief. PCGS MS69.

Housed in a First Strike PCGS tagged holder, which actually does seem to bring a modest premium these days. I don't go in much for modern coinage, but I confess that I did order one of these from the mint when they first came out. Now that the premiums over melt have settled down to reasonable levels, it might be a good time to consider adding one of these

to your own collection. PCGS #407405. \$ 2100.

World Coins

ca. 1249-1286. Scotland Silver Penny. PCGS AU50.

Alexander III. Handsomely toned in Blue and gray, this long cross penny has a clear portrait and is remarkably well made for the period. A great piece of history with a very modest price tag. \$475.

ca. 1461-1470 Edward IV Groat. Almost Uncirculated [uncertified].

A great example of hammered English coinage, with jolly old Edward IV's face being fully visible and sharp. The coin is graced with attractive original toning, and overall just a classy piece of the London mint's work. \$325.

Circa 1780's "clustered coin clump", Uncirculated details [uncertified].

A sloped stack of five (5) circa 1784 silver Eight Reales, fused together with coral. This came from the wreck of the El Cazador (The Hunter), a ship sailing from Vera Cruz to New Orleans with a cargo of freshly minted coins in the Winter of 1784. The ship sank, and all aboard perished. This clump is definitely a conversation piece, what with the coral & shells still adhering. It consists of 5 (silver dollar sized) Pieces of Eight, blackened but in very high grade, fused together with coral, including a large shell that sticks out like a megaphone at the side of the coin stack. \$1400.

1783 Mexico 8 Reales. PCGS graded AU55.

Mexico City mintmark; FF assayer. This high grade "piece of 8" is out of the same collection as the "clump o'coins" offered above -- though obviously not from the bottom of the ocean(!). It was purchased by the owner of the clump to show what these coins likely looked like prior to going down to Davy Jones' locker. Arrgh, Mateys. \$875.

1802 Peru Two Reales. PCGS Graded XF40.

Lima mint, IJ assayer. Well struck, lightly circulated and crusty original example of this scarcer two reales type. The coin is 2-3% off center, and includes a tiny bit of a blank planchet on the reverse. The two reales was the workhorse denomination in the USA long after the US mint started dribbling out US twenty-five cent pieces. A perfect representative of this denomination for someone collecting early quarters. \$375.

Contemporary Forgery

1861 Quarter Eagle Contemporary Forgery. Almost Uncirculated [uncertified].

Full gold wash remaining and very close to as struck, this Civil War dated counterfeit is the nicest I recall coming across. This is the second specimen of this date I have handled in the past year, but I believe it is from different dies, as this specimen has a dramatic die crack on the obverse. \$250.

Exonumia

1831 dated Imitation Gold Guinea. Merchant Token. Choice uncirculated [uncertified].

While at a West Coast show I was fortunate to find a dealer who had a small group of the most magnificently preserved gaming tokens from the early 1800's that I recall seeing. I was able to choose the best five out of the 10-12 that he had. The photo is of one of them, though they are all similarly well preserved. They are advertising Fattorini and Sons Jewelers in Bradford. No matter which one you get, I promise you will be delighted. \$100.

1862 St. Paul's Church at Rome – Cathedral Medal, by Jacques Wiener. . Bronze. Uncirculated [uncertified].

Van Hoydonck 186; Reinecke 49. 59 mm diameter. Even chocolate brown color, with semi prooflike fields. The Papal Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls (Italian: *Basilica Papale di San Paolo fuori le Mura*), commonly known as St Paul's Outside the Walls, is one of Rome's four ancient major basilicas. Though it has burned several times over the centuries, it looks pretty much the way it was built by Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. \$395.

1862 St. Etienne Cathedral Medal by Jacques Wiener. Bronze. Uncirculated [uncertified].

Van Hoydonck 191; Reinecke 38. 59 mm diameter. A beautiful mahogany brown color, with semi-prooflike mirrors. Saint Etienne's in Caen, also called the church of L'Abbaye aux Hommes, is one of the wonders of medieval architecture. The church was founded in 1061 by William the Conqueror. \$395.

1863 Sutler Token. NGC MS65 BN.

F-NL-4a. Quite a rare token, and this specimen is quite likely the finest known. It came directly from the Cruikshank family. Red and brown coloration, nice luster and no trace of wear. \$1250.

1864 Cathedral at Florence Medal by Jacques Wiener. Bronze. Uncirculated [uncertified].

Van Hoydonck 205; Eidlitz 28/155; Reinecke 46. Even medium brown color, with a carbon fleck at the obverse rim at 8 o'clock. This cathedral has the largest brick dome ever constructed. I recently saw a documentary where scientists were building a scale model of this dome to try and figure out how it was done. To sum it up – it was not easy. \$395.

Waiter! There is a Bee in My Soup. Er – I mean on My Medal. Uncirculated [uncertified].

This is a late 1800's German medal from Stuttgart that is a little larger than a quarter. The motto reads: "Sunt Sua Praemia Laudi" which is Latin for, "They are their own reward for Virtue" or something like that (my thanks to *Google Translate*). Very pretty & wicked cool if you like such unusual things. \$95.

[Contact info to reserve coins:](#)

Website - www.DaveWcoins.com

My email address - davewnuck@gmail.com

Phone - [\(203\) 231-1213](tel:(203)231-1213)









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